

**Board of Veterans Services
Meeting Minutes
November 17, 2016**

DRAFT

A meeting of the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) was held on Thursday, November 17, 2016 at the Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center, 1601 Broad Rock Boulevard, Richmond.

Members Present

- Richard Anderson
- Max Beyer
- Chris Chon
- Michael Dick
- Susan Hippen
- James Icenhour
- Nick Kesler
- Sandra Love
- Kathleen Murphy
- Laurie Neff
- Belinda Pinckney
- Christopher Stolle
- Pat Webb, Chairman, Veterans Services Foundation
- Bart Barton, Chairman, Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
- Steven Combs, Deputy Commissioner, representing the Department of Veterans Services

Members Absent

- Joana Garcia
- William Haneke
- Johnny Johnson
- Thad Jones
- Donald Kaiserman
- Bryce Reeves
- Jennifer Wexton

Commonwealth of Virginia Officials Present

- Delegate Kirk Cox, Chairman, Virginia WWI and WWII Commemoration Commission
- Cheryl Jackson, Executive Director, Virginia WWI and WWII Commemoration Commission
- Rick Oertel, Office of Delegate Kirk Cox
- Amy Beauchamp, Department of Veterans Services (DVS)
- Glendalynn Glover, DVS
- Robyn Jennings, DVS
- Betty Ann Liddell, DVS
- Charlie Palumbo, DVS

Materials Distributed as part of the Agenda Packet

- Agenda
- Draft minutes of the August 18 meeting
- Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC) Chairman's Report with attached Summary of JLC 2017 Initiatives
- Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Chairman's Report
- Proposed BVS 2017 Meeting Dates & Places
- Proposal for Ad Hoc Working Group for Virginia Women Veterans Initiative

Call to Order

Chairman Jim Icenhour called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. The roll was called and a quorum was determined with 15 of 22 members present.

Approval of Agenda

Delegate Rich Anderson made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Michael Dick, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried **unanimously**. The approved agenda is included as *Attachment 1*.

Introduction of DVS Staff and Guests

DVS Deputy Commissioner Steven Combs introduced the DVS staff and guests. Their names are recorded above.

Welcome to Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center and overview

Ms. Robyn Jennings, Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC) Administrator, welcomed the Board members and guests to SBVCC and delivered a presentation covering SBVCC services, census, and financials. Ms. Jennings answered questions from several Board members on SBVCC operations and finances.

Approval of August 18, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Delegate Chris Stolle made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Nick Kesler, to approve the August 18 Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion carried **unanimously**.

Virginia World War I and World War II Commemoration Commission

Chairman Icenhour welcomed Delegate Kirk Cox, the Chairman of the Virginia WWI and WWII Commemoration Commission, and Ms. Cheryl Jackson, the Executive Director of the Commission. They delivered a presentation on the work of the Commission, distributed an information package, and extended a special invitation to the Board members to attend the "Dawn of Infamy: America Goes to War" event at the University of Richmond on December 8, 2016, noting that the event would feature a special tribute to World War II veterans.

Delegate Cox and Ms. Jackson answered several questions from the members and explained that the Commission website (www.VirginiaWorldWarII.org) has much additional information on Virginia's commemoration of the 100th anniversary of World War I and 75th anniversary of World War II.

Reports

Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC) Chairman Bart Barton gave a short report on the JLC (*Attachment 2*). He noted that the JLC had been briefed by DVS Benefits Director

Tom Herthel on the situation at the DVS McGuire Benefits office, and asked if Deputy Commissioner Combs if he could provide any updates. Deputy Commissioner Combs said that DVS would provide both the Board and the JLC with updates as soon as possible.

Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Chairman Pat Webb gave a short report on the VSF (*Attachment 3*).

Deputy Commissioner Combs and Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) Program Interim Director Betty Ann Liddell delivered a presentation on the VVFS Working Group. Mr. Combs noted that it was the exact same slides as used by Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs John C. Harvey, Jr., the Chairman of the VVFS Working Group, in his presentation to the General Assembly's Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) on November 14, 2016.

Update on new veterans care center projects

Chairman Icenhour stated that, in the interest of time, the update on the new veterans care center projects would be deferred to a later date. Mr. Combs said that DVS would send the members a copy of the presentation following the meeting and would provide additional updates as necessary at future meetings.

New Business

Proposed Code Changes

Chairman Icenhour noted that Ms. Carrie Ann Alford has been working with the legislative members of the Board on the proposed legislation to implement the Code changes approved by the Board at the August meeting. He asked Deputy Commissioner Combs if anything further was needed from the Board. Mr. Combs noted that Delegate Rich Anderson has been working closely with Ms. Alford and that they had everything well in hand.

Approve BVS 2017 meeting schedule

Ms. Susan Hippen made a **motion, seconded** by Delegate Kathleen Murphy, to approve the BVS Meeting Schedule as presented. Following discussion regarding moving the proposed October meeting to November, Delegate Rich Anderson made a **substitute motion, seconded** by Delegate Chris Stolle, to approve the dates and places listed below. The motion carried **unanimously**.

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Virginia Veterans Cemetery, 10300 Pridesville Rd, Amelia

Thursday, June 22, 2017

Virginia War Memorial, 621 S Belvidere St, Richmond (Note: location may change depending on status of VWM construction project)

Thursday, November 16, 2017

Location TBD (tentative location is Petersburg Freedom Support Center, 32 W Washington St, Petersburg – DVS to confirm)

JLC Chairman Barton extended an invitation to the Board members to attend the 2017 JLC Conference at the General Assembly on January 12, 2017. He noted that Ms. Alford would provide additional details at a later date.

Report from Veteran Entrepreneurship Working Group

Mr. Nick Kesler, leader of the BVS Veteran Entrepreneurship Working Group, provided a short update on the input he has provided to the Department of Veterans Services and the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs on an initiative to create a veteran entrepreneurship grant pilot program. Mr. Kesler noted that the proposed initiative would have both a legislative and a budget component, but that the amount of funding that would be included in the Governor's proposed FY18 budget had not yet been released. He stated that he would keep the Board up to date on budget and legislative actions in the 2017 General Assembly.

Several members asked Mr. Kesler about what the next steps would be for the BVS Veteran Entrepreneurship Working Group, and offered their assistance in developing additional proposals for future consideration.

Mr. Kesler responded that he would develop a proposed action plan for future work group activities after the release of the Governor's introduced budget in December and the filing of legislation by a member or members of the General Assembly. Deputy Commissioner Combs promised the assistance of the Department of Veterans Services with future workgroup activities.

Chairman Icenhour asked Mr. Kesler to keep the Board members up to date throughout the 2017 General Assembly session and for the workgroup to study additional entrepreneurship initiatives that the Board can recommend to the Executive and Legislative branches before the 2018 session.

Proposal for BVS Work Group to study Women Veterans in Virginia

Delegate Kathleen Murphy presented the proposal for a BVS Work Group to study Women Veterans in Virginia (*Attachment 4*). The proposal was adopted by **unanimous consent**. Ms. Susan Hippen, Ms. Sandra Love, Ms. Laurie Neff, and Ms. Belinda Pinckney volunteered to serve with Delegate Murphy on the work group.

Public comment

There was no public comment

Wrap Up & Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Tour of Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center

Several Board members joined SBVCC staff for a tour of the facility.

ATTACHMENT 1

BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES

Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center

1601 Broad Rock Blvd, Richmond

November 17, 2016

10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

AGENDA

- I. Opening and Pledge of Allegiance – *Jim Icenhour, BVS Chairman* (10:00 – 10:02)
- II. Roll Call and Quorum Determination – *Jim Icenhour, BVS Chairman*, (10:02 – 10:05)
- III. Approval of Agenda, introduction of DVS staff and guests – *Jim Icenhour, BVS Chairman* (10:05 – 10:10)
- IV. Approval of August 18, 2016 Meeting Minutes – *Jim Icenhour, BVS Chairman* (10:10 – 10:12)
- V. Welcome to Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center and brief overview – *Robyn Jennings, SBVCC Administrator* (10:12-10:22)
- VI. Reports (10:22 – 10:45)
 - a. Joint Leadership Council – *Bart Barton, JLC Chairman*
 - b. Veterans Services Foundation – *Pat Webb, VSF Chairman*
 - c. DVS & VVFS Work Group – *John Newby, Commissioner*
- VII. Update on new veterans care center projects – *Steven Combs, Deputy Commissioner* (10:45-11:05)
- VIII. WWI/WWII Commemoration Commission – *Cheryl Jackson* (11:05 – 11:25)
- IX. New Business: (11:25-11:45)
 - a. Proposed Code change draft bill language from legislators, *Carrie Ann Alford, DVS Policy Director*
 - b. Approve BVS meeting schedule for 2017, *Jim Icenhour*
 - c. Report from Veteran Entrepreneurship Work Group, *Nick Kesler*
 - d. Proposal for Work Group to study Women Veterans in Virginia, *Del. Kathleen Murphy*
 - e. “Good of the Order” Reports, *All Members*
- X. Public comment (11:45 – 11:50)
- XI. Wrap Up & Adjourn – *Jim Icenhour, Chairman* (11:50-11:55)
- XII. Tour of Sitter & Barfoot VCC for BVS Members (11:55-12:30)

ATTACHMENT 2

Joint Leadership Council Report to the Board of Veterans Services November 17, 2016

The Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC) met once since the last meeting of the Board of Veterans Services on August 18, 2016.

At its meeting on October 12, 2016, the JLC received an update from DVS Benefits Director, Tom Herthel, who provided details on the status of improvements within the Benefits Section. These included the expansion of field offices, additional staff training and quality controls and the new service for representation to the Board of Veteran Appeals in Washington. His presentation also included a short discussion on the information available concerning the recently discovered breach of veterans' files.

The JLC completed its discussion on 2017 Legislative Initiatives and approved six initiatives that remained from last year. A summary is attached to this report. The JLC agreed to consider a seventh initiative, which was being drafted on the topic of veteran entrepreneurship grant initiative, at the December meeting.

Lastly the JLC approved the attached list of appointed officers for 2016-2017.

The next scheduled meeting of the JLC is December 21, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Harold H. Barton, Jr
Chairman

JLC ELECTED OFFICERS: 2016-2017

- Chairman: Harold H. ("Bart") Barton, Jr.
- Vice Chairman: Marie G. Juliano

JLC APPOINTED OFFICERS: 2016-2017

- Legislative Officer: David K. Sitler
- Assistant Legislative Officer: Robert A. Sempek
- Chaplain: L.T. Whitmore
- Constitution & By-Laws Committee:
 - Chairman: Richard Mansfield
 - Members: Perry Taylor and Adam Provost
- Nominating Committee:
 - Chairman: Dan Boyer
 - Members: John Clickener, Jon Ostrowski
- JLC Representative to the Virginia Military Advisory Council (VMAC):
 - Primary: William Barrett, Jr.
 - Alternate: Curtis Jennings

- JLC Representative to Board of Veteran Services (BVS)
 - Primary: Harold H. (“Bart”) Barton, Jr.
 - Alternate: Marie G. Juliano
- JLC Representative to Veterans Services Foundation (VSF)
 - Primary: William B. Ashton
 - Alternate: Abe Zino (A)
- JLC Representative to the Virginia War Memorial Board (VWMB)
 - Primary: Marie G. Juliano
 - Alternate: Robert Huffman
- JLC Representative to the State Board of Elections Electronic Ballot Return working group:
 - Primary: Stu Williams
 - Alternate: Vic Pena (A)
- JLC Representative to BVS Committees:
 - Cemeteries
 - Primary: Charlie Montgomery
 - Alternate: George Corbett (A)
 - Care Centers
 - Primary: Danal Dennison
 - Alternate: Chip Moran (A)
 - Benefits
 - Primary: Perry C. Taylor
 - Alternate: Dan Karnes (A)
 - Veteran Entrepreneurship Study Group
 - Primary: Lauren Augustine
 - Alternate: TBD

Summary of 2017 Initiatives

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
JLC 2017-01 <i>Virginia Veteran and Family Support Services</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly appropriate additional funds and new FTE positions for VVFS as requested by the work group.
JLC 2017-02 <i>Virginia War Memorial</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly appropriate additional \$100,000 (GF) FY18 to ensure the Virginia War Memorial has the resources necessary to accomplish its dual mission of honor and education.
JLC 2017-03 <i>Guard Income Tax Subtraction</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly increase the state income tax subtraction level for members of the Virginia National Guard from \$3,000 to \$5,000 per year.
JLC 2017-04 <i>In-state tuition for all members of the Reserve Components</i>	That the Governor and the General Assembly change the eligibility for in-state tuition to include all members of the Virginia National Guard and the Reserve components, thus recognizing their service to the Commonwealth and treating them equally to the active components and veterans
JLC 2017-05 <i>VMSDEP</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly remove the requirement that a veteran’s disability rating be combat related. Instead, a permanent service-connected disability rating of at least 90%, plus satisfaction of the other requirements currently in the Code, would qualify a veteran’s spouse or child for VMSDEP benefits.
JLC 2017-06 <i>Electronic Ballot Return</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly enact legislation and provide budget support of a pilot program for the electronic return of absentee ballots by Virginia’s deployed military service members to enfranchise their voting privileges.

ATTACHMENT 3

Veterans Services Foundation Report to the Board of Veterans Services November 17, 2016

The Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Board of Trustees has held one meeting since the last BVS meeting. A Board meeting was held on November 9 with a quorum present. In addition to the usual report and update on VVFS, the Board heard reports from Benefits and the Military Medics and Corpsman Program and the following events occurred and actions taken at the Board meeting:

- (1) Reviewed Foundation income, expenses, and fundraising events conducted during FY16 and 17;
- (2) Reviewed the Auditor of Public Accounts audit for CY15;
- (3) Reviewed a draft modification to the VSF Action Plan;
- (4) Approved the First FY17 VSF Financial Report;
- (5) Approved updates of VSF-DVS Joint Policies #5, 6, 6A, 7, 8, 9 and 11; and
- (6) Approved alternative VSF Meeting dates of May 11, August 10, and November 9 at the Libbie Mill Library.

Donors and donations started to decline in February 2016 but were not evident because donations normally decline in February. However, they did not increase significantly during the following five months except for April. Since the beginning of FY17 in July, donors and donations for VVFS, the benchmarking income account, have significantly decreased by 50 percent for donors and an average of 62 percent for donations. As of 31 October, the Foundation has received donations during FY17 of about \$208,000, of which only about \$100,000 is for VVFS and \$100,000 for V3. Fortunately, if this continues, the Foundation has sufficient reserves to cover the shortfalls for two years.

Indications point to a challenging FY 2017 as propensity to give may be reflected in a slower growth in donations, partly accounted for by ongoing economic issues facing the nation and Commonwealth as well as donor fatigue after significant donation revenue increases in past years.

As reported at the last BVS board meeting the Foundation Board of Trustees completed a strategic Plan for FY 2017 through FY2021, with the assistance of the DVS staff, and is in the process of executing it per the corresponding Action Plan. This plan will include planning for annual and capital fund raising campaigns to address both the short and long term requirements for donations to sustain operations and meet the challenges the likes of which we are currently facing. The Foundation Board is looking forward to its implementation by all concerned, unless it is delayed by General Fund budget decreases or other DVS considerations.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for March 22, 2017 at the American Legion, but a Development Committee Retreat is planned for late February to discuss and develop a proposal to implement an annual as well as capital fund raising plan. Items for the March meeting may also include: (1) approval of the Second Quarter FY17 Financial Statement and (2) approval of budget adjustments for FY17, if any; (3) discussion of Strategy Plan and Board Action Plan progress; (4) take additional actions as required to support the five year strategy plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Webb
VSF Chairman

ATTACHMENT 4

October 21, 2016

MEMORANDUM

To: Jim Icenhour, Chairman, Board of Veterans Services
From: Hon. Kathleen Murphy, 34th House of Delegates District, BVS Member
Mrs. Annie Walker, Director, Veterans Education Training and Employment, DVS
RE: PROPOSAL FOR WORK GROUP – Virginia Women Veterans Initiative

Mr. Chairman, 107,201 of our approximately 800,000 veterans in Virginia are women, which is 14%, making Virginia tied for the largest percentage of women veterans in the nation, along with Alaska. Yet, unlike other states with fewer veterans and women veterans, the Virginia Department of Veterans Services does not have a dedicated person or program in place to support these veterans.

We would like to make a recommendation to form a work group to explore ways can better support women veterans.

We know that many women veterans feel isolated, unacknowledged and invisible upon returning home. Many Americans still think veteran = man. Some discounts their military experience, or simply can't fathom what they've been through. We must continue to build mutually supportive networks for, of and by women veterans. DVS recognizes the absence of a state-wide, comprehensive network addressing the unique transition, employment and quality of life issues women veterans face. DVS has begun to address this issue through federal and community partnerships. These efforts resulted in the **2016 Virginia Women Veterans Summit**, attended by over 200 women veterans from 3 states.

We humbly request that the Board of Veterans Services complete a comprehensive analysis of best practices in other states that could be in line with the directives of the Governor and Secretary to "think outside the box," and continue Virginia's reputation as a national leader in support of Virginia's veterans and their families. DVS is open to all paths, processes and solutions.

1. Committee Purpose and Scope:

BVS should form a work group to gain a comprehensive understanding of Virginia's women veterans, services tailored to their needs, and the gaps therein. The work group would form for a one-year study of the issues, specifically:

- i. Identify key elements of, and correlation between the various elements of, and potential for Virginia's local and state service networks for women veterans. Analysis should include studying variables, including: women veterans, disabled women veterans, enlisted/NCOs v. officers, education levels, and other factors the committee deems important.
- ii. Engage key stakeholders, including subject matter experts at Virginia's academic and healthcare facilities to identify past, current, and future initiatives related to women veterans.

- iii. Data collection would be done through public hearing forums and a survey, as deemed appropriate.
- iv. Work closely with the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs and Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services to ensure they are supportive of the study and any initiatives resulting from the work group.
- v. Conduct a gap analysis and recommend appropriate recommendations to various stakeholders and state leaders regarding actions, mechanisms, and any potential funding/legislative needs to enhance Virginia's women veterans service networks.

2. Membership and Timeline:

- i. The committee would consist of no less than three non-legislative Board members and one legislative Board member, meet as deemed appropriate by the members to meet the prescribed timeline. The committee would seek volunteers to conduct the appropriate research.
- ii. The committee will seek the assistance of, and guidance from, the DVS Policy Director on research of other states, and other committee actions related to policy, legislation and/or budget issues.
- iii. The committee would officially form on the date designated by the Chairman, and conduct the study within one year. The committee will provide a report of their findings and recommendations to the Chairman, Commissioner and Secretary in writing, and present their findings to the full Board at the meeting scheduled closest to the end of the one year timeframe.

Very Respectfully,
Delegate Kathleen Murphy
34th House of Delegates District
Member, Board of Veterans Services

Annie Walker, Director
Veterans Education Training and Employment
Virginia Department of Veterans Services